

My Four-Legged
Friend:

A Children's Guide to
Better Understanding,
Loving, and Respecting
Dogs

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DEDICATION

To my wonderful nephews,
Alan and Brice—
may this guide help you understand
and love our four-legged friends even more!

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INTRODUCTION

Dogs are loyal and affectionate companions.

They can be our friends, play with us, and even protect us.

But it's important to know how to approach them safely to avoid scaring them or putting yourself in danger.

This guide will explain everything you need to know!

CHAPTER 1:

UNDERSTANDING DOGS

Dogs don't speak with words like we do, but they use their bodies to express their emotions, intentions, and needs.

Their body language is a mix of postures, movements, facial expressions, and sounds.

By paying close attention to these signs, we can better understand our four-legged companions and interact with them in a more respectful and effective way.

I'm going to show you a series of images illustrating different expressions in dogs.

Take a good look at them; they'll reveal how dogs communicate with their bodies.

First, here are a few signs to look for:

 **The tail:** A wagging tail doesn't always mean the dog is happy. A fast, high wagging motion can indicate excitement, while a tail held low or tucked between the legs can signify fear or submission.

🐾 **The ears:** Ears pointed forward show attention or curiosity, while ears pinned back can mean fear or discomfort.

🐾 **Eyes:** A dog that stares intently at another dog or a person may be expressing a threat, whereas a gentle gaze and blinking are signs of appeasement.

🐾 **Body posture:** A relaxed dog will have a relaxed posture, while a stressed or defensive dog will stand stiffly. A dog that rolls onto its back may be showing submission or simply seeking affection.

🐾 **Vocalizations:** Barking, growling, and whining are also forms of communication, but they are often accompanied by body language that provides more insight into the emotion being felt.

1. A happy dog has a wagging tail, relaxed ears, a gentle gaze, and a slightly open mouth.



Example: When you come home and your dog runs up to you wagging its tail, it's happy to see you!

2. A curious dog has its head tilted to the side, ears perked up, and an attentive gaze.



Example: He looks at a new object or an unfamiliar noise with his head tilted.

3. A frightened dog has its tail tucked between its legs, ears pinned back, and is backing away or hiding.



Example: He is afraid of a loud noise, such as a thunderstorm, and goes under a table.

4. An **angry dog** has its fur standing on end, growls, bares its teeth, and stares intently.



Example: A dog growls when someone approaches its food bowl.

5. A stressed or anxious dog pants rapidly, avoids eye contact, and licks its lips frequently.



Example: If a dog backs away and growls when you approach, it means he is afraid or wants to be left alone.

6. A tired or sick dog doesn't want to play, sleeps a lot, avoids cuddles, and isolates itself.



Example: If your usually playful dog stays lying down all day without moving, you should tell an adult.

7. A dog that rolls onto its back with all four paws in the air can indicate three different attitudes:



- **It shows that he trusts you (a relaxed position)**

If he is relaxed, with his tail down, eyes half-closed or closed, and breathing slowly:

- He feels comfortable with you; he is **confident**.
- He may even invite you to pet his belly (but be careful —not all dogs like that!).

Don't rush to touch his belly. Ask him “with your energy”: calmly bring your hand closer and see if he tenses up or stays relaxed.

- **He wants to play (indirect play posture)**

Some dogs roll onto their backs to **get attention** or **encourage play**, especially with other dogs or children.

They may squirm, give little paw swipes, or wag their tail rapidly.

It's a playful way of saying, **“Come on, play with me!”**

- **He is showing submission or discomfort**

If the dog is frozen, looking to the side, with ears pinned back, mouth closed, and tail tucked:

He rolls onto his back to **show he's submitting** because he's scared or uncomfortable. In dog language, he's saying, **“I don't want a fight.”**

In this case, **don't pet him**: it could scare him even more, or even provoke a defensive bite.

Conclusion: it all depends on the rest of the body!

Same posture, three possible meanings.

What matters is:

- The dog's overall demeanor (relaxed or tense)
- The situation (play, rest, stress)
- And your own calmness

KEY POINTS:

🐾 If a dog shows signs of discomfort, it's important to respect its space and not approach it so as not to disturb it.

🐾 Instead, you can stay at a distance and wait for the dog to calm down, or ask an adult to come help you.

🐾 This way, you'll learn to understand and respect the emotions of our canine friends, while ensuring both their well-being and your own!

CHAPTER 2:

HOW TO APPROACH A DOG?

Approaching a dog you don't know requires gentleness, respect, and caution.

Even though many dogs are friendly, you should never forget that they each have their own history, personality, and limits.

For their well-being—and for your safety—it's essential to use the right approach from the very first interaction.

In this chapter, you'll discover the fundamental rules to follow for building a trusting relationship with a dog, while respecting its space and needs.

1. Always ask the owner for permission before petting a dog.



Not all dogs are comfortable around strangers. Some may be fearful, stressed, or even reactive.

Plus, the owner knows their dog's behavior and limits better than anyone else.

By asking for permission, you avoid a potentially unpredictable reaction and respect the space of both the dog and its owner.

2. Let the dog come to sniff your hand, without moving.



When you encounter a dog, don't walk directly toward it, even if you want to pet it. Stay still and gently hold out your hand, palm up or slightly to the side, below the level of its head. This allows the dog to approach on its own, without feeling threatened.

Dogs primarily use their sense of smell to recognize people.

By keeping your hand accessible, you give the dog the chance to sniff you at its own pace, without pressure.

Don't move your hand or wave it around; just stay calm and composed. If the dog feels comfortable, he'll come over on his own to sniff it. This first contact is a kind of canine "hello": it's up to him to decide if he's ready to bond.

3. Don't make any sudden movements; approach slowly.



A movement that's too fast or unpredictable can scare a dog, especially if he's naturally anxious or not used to strangers.

By taking a calm and gradual approach, you give the dog time to observe you and get used to your presence without stress.

4. Don't look the dog directly in the eyes; this can scare him.



In canine language, direct and prolonged eye contact can be interpreted as a sign of challenge or confrontation.

To avoid intimidation, it's best to look away slightly and adopt a relaxed posture to show that you're not a threat.

5. Pet him gently, and never on the head right away.



The head is a sensitive area for most dogs.

Direct contact can be perceived as intrusive or threatening, especially if the dog doesn't know you well.

Once he's comfortable with you, he may accept being petted on the head.

But to get to know each other, it's best to start by petting the areas where the dog feels safe:

- Under the chin, just below the head,
- At the base of the neck (not on the top of the head),
- Or gently on the upper chest (the top of the chest).

These areas feel less threatening to him than the head or the hindquarters. He can see you and feel your touch.

Watch his reactions

See if he:

- Tenses up or freezes
- Steps back
- Licks his lips or yawns

If so, leave him alone for now—he doesn't want to take the interaction any further.

If, on the other hand, he:

- Relaxes
- Moves closer to you
- Gently wags his tail

You're officially friends!

If he shows no signs of discomfort, you can pet his back

- Go slowly, always using gentle movements, without patting or rubbing too hard.
- Never touch the tail, paws, or belly, unless the dog offers them to you (by rolling onto its back, for example).

In summary:

- Start at the base of the head, the top of the neck, or the chest
- Be gentle, calm, and attentive
- It's the dog who gives consent—not you!

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Approaching a dog safely relies on a few simple but essential rules:

 **Always ask the owner for permission** before touching the dog.

 **Let the dog come to you** by gently holding out your hand, palm down.

 **Use slow, calm movements** so as not to startle the dog.

 **Avoid staring the dog in the eyes** so as not to make it uncomfortable.

 **Start petting under the chin, just below the head, at the base of the neck, and on the upper chest**—not directly on the head.

By following these steps, you ensure that you interact with the dog in a respectful and safe manner, and you maximize your chances of creating a positive first encounter, while demonstrating your respect and kindness toward the animal.

CHAPTER 3:

WHAT NOT TO DO

Dogs are wonderful companions, full of love and joy.

But for them to feel comfortable with you, you need to learn to respect their space and their needs.

A dog may sometimes be afraid or feel uncomfortable if approached in the wrong way.

To become a true friend to dogs, there are a few simple rules to follow.

With these tips, you'll know how to behave so that every encounter with a dog is a moment of happiness and trust, for both you and the dog!

1. Don't run toward a dog—it might scare him.



Even if you're very excited to meet them, running toward a dog can scare them.

It might feel threatened and react by running away, barking, or, in the worst case, defending itself.

Always approach him calmly and at his own pace.

2. Don't shout or make loud noises—it might scare him.



Sudden noises or loud shouting can stress them out, make them nervous, or cause them to react unpredictably.

What you hear as loud, the dog hears seven times louder.

A slamming door, fireworks, a scream, a vacuum cleaner... To him, it's as if someone suddenly turned the TV volume up to 7x in his ears.

Dogs have extremely keen and sensitive hearing.

What is normal for us can be unpleasant, even painful, for them.

So speak to him softly, avoid sudden noises, and respect his need for calm.

It's not that he's timid. It's just that he perceives the world much more intensely than we do.

Speak to him gently in a calm voice to build trust.

3. Don't pull on their tail or ears—it hurts them.



A dog's tail and ears are very sensitive.

Pulling on them, even as a game, can cause pain and make him wary or aggressive.

Why should you never pull a dog's tail?

A dog's tail is not a toy!

It is part of its spine and contains very sensitive nerves.

By pulling on it, even "just for fun," you can cause:

- Immediate pain
- Fear or a loss of confidence
- Nerve damage

And the most serious thing is that these injuries can have long-term consequences, such as:

- ◇ Permanent sensitivity
- ◇ Motor disorders
- ◇ Incontinence (involuntary leakage of urine or stool), especially as they age

It's not just a "clumsy move": it's physical abuse that can harm their health and dignity. They may lose trust in you or become afraid of you.

Respecting a dog also means respecting his body. Let's learn to touch him gently... or not at all, if he doesn't want to.

Why should you never pull, twist, or fiddle with a dog's ears?

A dog's ears aren't meant to be pulled, slapped, or handled without reason. They're full of nerve endings and extremely sensitive to touch.

Pulling on a dog's ears is like pinching someone very hard in a sensitive spot.

This can cause:

- Sharp pain
- Fear or a defensive reaction
- Infections or internal injuries, especially if the ear is already vulnerable (ear infection, irritation, etc.)
- An ear hematoma (or "otohematoma"): This is a pocket of blood that forms inside the ear due to trauma. It is very painful, causes the ear to swell, and may require surgery.
- Cartilage damage: If the ear is twisted or mishandled, the cartilage can become deformed or necrotic, causing the ear to no longer stand upright or to remain permanently drooped.
- Chronic pain: The nerves in the ear are sensitive. An injury can lead to lasting hypersensitivity or even behavioral problems.

- Stress or psychological trauma: A dog that has been mistreated in the ears may become fearful, aggressive, or try to avoid contact when someone approaches its head, even for treatment.

In certain breeds, the ears are particularly delicate (e.g., Cocker Spaniels, Labradors, Basset Hounds...).

Handling them carelessly can cause injuries, head shaking, or even long-term hearing problems.

And most importantly: a dog with ear pain may not always be able to express it other than through aggression or fleeing.

Bottom line: if a dog could talk, it would tell you:

- Respect my body: I'm not a stuffed animal!
 - My tail is my balance, my language. I'm a living being, not a toy!
 - Twisting or pulling my ears? That's violent!
- My ears are for listening, not for your amusement.

What you can do instead:

- Approach me gently
- Talk to me in a calm voice
- Let me come to you
- Pet me respectfully and gently (and only if I want to be petted!)

4. Don't disturb a dog that's sleeping or eating—he might growl.



Like humans, dogs need peace and quiet to sleep and eat.

Surprising or bothering them during these times can irritate them and cause them to growl to show their discomfort.

Leave him alone and respect his rest and mealtimes.

5. Don't touch an unfamiliar dog without asking; he might be wary.



Not all dogs are sociable or used to strangers; as you've seen before, some dogs may be fearful, stressed, or even reactive when a stranger tries to touch them.

By trying to pet him without warning, you risk making him uncomfortable or provoking an unpredictable reaction.

Always ask the owner for permission before approaching or touching a dog. It's a matter of respect, safety... and common sense.

Imagine: if a stranger suddenly asked you to come over to them, you'd hesitate, wouldn't you?

Well, it's the same for a dog. He needs to know that you're a friend, not a threat.

6. Don't sit on a dog.



Even if some dogs are big and sturdy, you should never sit on them.

It can hurt them, make them uncomfortable, or stress them out.

Moreover, this behavior is disrespectful to the animal, which deserves to be treated with gentleness and consideration.

REMEMBER:

 Don't run toward a dog, even if you're happy to see it. Walk slowly to show the dog that you're friendly.

 Don't shout or make loud noises near a dog. Speak to it softly so it feels safe.

 Never pull on its tail or ears.

No sudden movements near its ears.

No pulling, no tickling, no jokes.

If you want to touch them, do so gently, and only if the dog is relaxed and used to you.

If you pull on them, it hurts him, and he might not want to play with you anymore.

 Don't disturb a dog that's sleeping or eating.

Otherwise, he might growl to say, "Leave me alone!"

 Don't touch a dog you don't know without asking its owner for permission before petting it!

 Never sit on a dog. Even if he's big, he's not a horse

CHAPTER 4:

WHAT TO DO IF A DOG IS SCARED OR GETS ANGRY?

Even though many dogs are friendly and playful, sometimes a dog may growl, bark, or bare its teeth.

These are important signs to understand: they mean the dog is stressed, scared, or trying to protect itself.

In situations like these, it's essential to respond appropriately to avoid making things worse.

Staying calm, moving slowly, and paying attention to the dog's signals are essential reflexes for protecting yourself and reassuring the animal.

Find out in this chapter how to react calmly if a dog acts aggressively!

If a dog growls, barks, or bares its teeth:



STAY CALM AROUND A GROWLING DOG

1. DON'T PANIC



2. DON'T STARE AT THE DOG



3. AVOID SUDDEN MOVEMENTS



4. BACK AWAY SLOWLY



5. DON'T YELL



6. OBSERVE HIS BODY LANGUAGE



1. Stay calm; don't shout.

When a dog growls, barks, or bares its teeth, it's usually a sign that it feels threatened, stressed, or wants to defend its territory.

If you scream or panic, you risk amplifying its excitement or anxiety.

It's essential to stay calm, breathe deeply, and adopt a relaxed posture so as not to make the situation worse.

2. Don't make any sudden movements and avoid looking the dog in the eyes.

A sudden movement can be interpreted as a provocation or an attempt to flee, which could prompt the dog to attack.

Additionally, direct and prolonged eye contact can be perceived as a challenge in canine language.

To avoid any confrontation, stay calm, move slowly, and look slightly to the side rather than into its eyes.

3. Back away slowly without turning your back.

If the dog shows signs of aggression, it is important not to turn your back on it.

This could trigger its predatory instinct and prompt it to attack.

Instead, back away slowly, without making any sudden movements, while keeping the dog in your line of sight.

This shows that you are not a threat without encouraging the dog to chase you.

4. If the dog runs toward you, do not run; stand still like a tree.

Running can trigger a hunting instinct in the dog, prompting it to chase you and potentially bite.

If a dog charges toward you, the best reaction is to stand still, with your arms at your sides, and avoid looking directly at it.

By adopting a neutral posture and not reacting, you can reduce its aggression and cause it to lose interest.

5. If a dog attacks you: protect yourself wisely.

Although rare, a dog may attack if it is very scared, startled, or feels threatened.

If this happens to you, do not panic under any circumstances.

Don't:

- Don't run (it triggers its hunting instinct)
- Don't scream or wave your arms around
- Don't press yourself against a wall or a tree (you'll be trapped with no way out)

What to do:

1. Play dead: curl up into a ball on the ground. Head in your knees, protect your neck with your arms. Keep your elbows close to your body and your hands on the back of your neck.



2. Don't move. Don't scream, don't squirm. This gesture shows the dog that you're not a threat; you're putting yourself in a submissive position.

3. The dog will likely stop. Most of the time, the dog will just sniff you or circle around you... without touching you.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

 If a dog growls, barks, or bares its teeth, stay calm and don't scream.

 Avoid sudden movements and don't look the dog in the eyes.

 Back away slowly without ever turning your back on the dog.

 If the dog runs toward you, don't run away: stand still like a tree.

 Adopt a relaxed posture and breathe deeply to show that you are not a threat.

 If a dog attacks you: play dead.

This gesture saves lives. It is taught in dog safety classes for children. And remember: the dog doesn't want to "attack" for no reason. It is reacting to an emotion: fear, stress, pain, or the need to protect.

By following these tips, you increase your chances of defusing a tense situation and protecting yourself from a potentially aggressive dog!

CHAPTER 5:

WORKING DOGS AND THEIR ROLES

Dogs aren't just our friends at home; some have very special and important missions.

They work every day to help humans with valuable tasks.

Whether guiding, protecting, monitoring, or rescuing, these dogs are true heroes!

But be careful: when they're on duty, it's essential not to distract them.

Let's learn together to get to know them better and respect their work!

1. Guide dogs for the blind:



They assist visually impaired or blind people in their daily lives.

Thanks to them, these people can walk safely, avoid obstacles, and get around more independently.

Never touch or call out to a guide dog when it is wearing its harness: it is on a mission for its owner!

2. Police dogs:



These dogs work with law enforcement.

They can retrieve objects, search for missing persons, detect hazardous substances, or protect police officers.

When you come across a police dog, respect its space: it's focused on its important work.

3. Herding dogs:



In fields and mountains, herding dogs watch over flocks of sheep, goats, or cows.

They guide them, herd them, and protect them from danger.

When you encounter one, keep your distance: it's watching over its animals and may be wary of strangers.

4. Rescue dogs:



After an accident, an earthquake, or in hard-to-reach areas, rescue dogs find injured or lost people.

Their exceptional sense of smell and courage save lives!

It's important not to disturb them while they're searching.

5. Security dogs in stores:



They work with a security guard to monitor and protect a location, such as a store or a shopping mall.

Thanks to them, the security guard can better spot dangers or people who aren't following the rules.

Never approach, touch, or speak to a security dog
➔ — they are doing their job and must stay focused to keep everyone safe!

KEY TAKEAWAY:

 Some dogs work to help people: they are guide dogs, police dogs, herding dogs, or rescue dogs.

 When you see a dog at work, it's important not to disturb them while they're on duty!

 **Don't pet them, don't call them, and don't distract them.**

 Respect its space so it can carry out its mission safely!

CHAPTER 6:

HOW TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF A DOG?

A dog is a loyal and affectionate companion.

But to keep them happy, healthy, and comfortable, they need special daily care.

Taking good care of a dog means meeting its basic needs: feeding it well, taking it for walks, playing with it, and looking after its health.

Here's everything you need to know to be a great dog owner!

1. What can they eat?

A dog can't eat just anything—and above all, a dog can't eat everything we eat!



⚠ If a dog ever eats something dangerous, tell an adult right away!

- ☒ What they can eat:
- Dog food appropriate for his age



- Dog treats



Dog treats are made especially for them: they're often used as rewards or during training.

They should remain a small treat and not replace actual meals! Don't give too many, because even if your dog loves them, they can make him sick or cause him to gain weight.

Some treats are also good for their teeth or help calm them down.

Always choose treats **appropriate for your dog's size and age**, and never give them human candy.

- **Well-cooked meat without salt or sauce (chicken, beef, turkey)**



- **Vegetables such as carrots or zucchini**



- **A little plain, well-cooked rice.**



- **A little cheese or plain yogurt**



- Cooked potatoes: OK in moderation



- If they are well-cooked in water or steamed,
- No salt, no butter, no spices,
- And when given in small amounts, they may be tolerated by some dogs.

But it is not an essential food. It is better to choose other, more easily digestible vegetables (carrots, zucchini, etc.).

- **Permitted fruits (in small amounts):**
 - **Strawberries:**



rich in vitamin C, but be careful of excess sugar.

- **Bananas:**



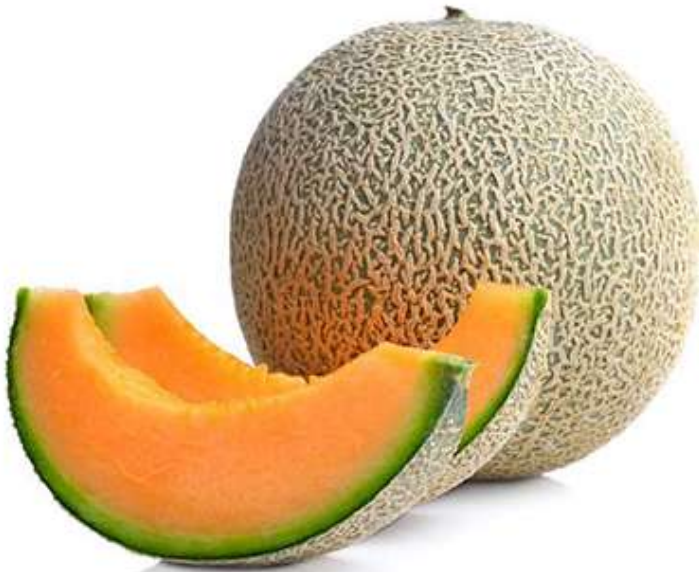
gentle on the stomach, good in small slices.

- **Watermelon:**



very refreshing, without the seeds or rind.

- **Melon:**



ripe and seedless.

- **Pears:**



peeled, seedless.

- **Blueberries:**



excellent for their antioxidants.

- **Raspberries:**



fine, but in very small quantities because of the natural xylitol they contain.

- **Mango:**



without skin or pit; very sweet, so give in moderation.

Quick reminders:

- Always **wash** fruit **thoroughly**.
- **Peel** if necessary, and remove **pits** and **seeds**.
- Serve the fruit **in pieces** appropriate for the dog's size.
- Introduce **one fruit at a time** to monitor for allergic or digestive reactions.

- **✗** What they shouldn't eat:

- **Avocado**



Contains a toxin called persin, which is toxic to dogs.
Can cause **vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory distress, and even heart problems.**

- **Chocolate**



Contains **theobromine** (especially in dark chocolate), which is **very dangerous** for dogs.

Can cause: **seizures, rapid heartbeat, vomiting, and even death.**

- **Grapes (and raisins)**



Even in small amounts, they can cause **acute kidney failure**.

Symptoms: **fatigue, vomiting, loss of appetite, kidney failure.**

- **Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruit):**



can upset a dog's stomach.

- **Onions**



Contain **sulfur compounds** that destroy a dog's red blood cells.

Can cause **severe anemia**, which can sometimes be fatal.

- **Garlic**



Even more concentrated than onions. Even in small, regular amounts, it can cause: **Anemia, fatigue, digestive problems, and damage to internal organs.**

- Cooked bones (chicken, pork, etc.)



They become brittle and shatter into **sharp fragments**.

Risk of **stomach or intestinal perforation, choking, or blockage**.

- Too much sugar or salt.



Dogs do not digest **sugar** well (risk of diabetes, obesity)

Excess salt is toxic (can cause **neurological disorders, vomiting, seizures**).

- **Raw or undercooked potatoes are DANGEROUS**



Contain solanine, a substance toxic to dogs, especially in:

- Raw potatoes
- Green or sprouted potatoes
- The skin or stems

Possible effects: **vomiting, tremors, diarrhea, neurological problems**

- **Macadamia nuts**



Causes **tremors, fever, vomiting, weakness**

- **Nuts (in general)**



Choking hazard, pancreatitis (high in fat), toxic mold

- **Unripe tomatoes / leaves**



Contain solanine → toxic to the nervous system

- **Wild mushrooms**



Some wild mushrooms are extremely toxic and even deadly to dogs, even in very small amounts. It is therefore crucial to know which ones to avoid to prevent any risk during walks in the forest or in the garden.

→ **risk of seizures, coma, death**

- **Cherries, plums, apricots (with pits)**



The pits contain **cyanide** → **highly toxic**

- **Raw fava beans / raw beans**



Contain phasin → **vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain**

- **Moldy food**



Mold on fruit that has fallen to the ground or ended up in the trash can cause **severe food poisoning**.
Produces mycotoxins → **neurotoxins or carcinogens**

- Expired kibble or treats



Fat oxidation → **slow poisoning, poor digestion**

- Cooking alcohol (fondue, sauces, etc.)



Ethanol is extremely toxic to dogs

- Industrial sugary products (cakes, cookies, yogurt, etc.)



Too much sugar, lactose, additives → **digestive problems, pancreatitis, obesity**

Good to know:

- Even a **small piece** can be enough to poison a dog, depending on its weight and health.
- Some dogs are **more sensitive than others**, especially puppies, older dogs, or sick dogs.

Symptoms of poisoning in dogs

- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Excessive drooling
- Tremors, seizures
- Lethargy, loss of coordination
- Breathing difficulties
- Coma or death (in severe cases)

What to do if ingested?

1. **Don't wait:** consult a veterinarian immediately.
2. **Bring a sample** of the mushroom if possible (in a separate bag).
3. **Do not try to make** your dog **vomit** without medical advice.

2. Walks



A dog absolutely needs to go outside every day!

- You should walk him for at least 30 minutes to an hour a day.
- If it's hot, it's best to take them out early in the morning or in the evening to prevent them from overheating.
- If it's cold and your dog is small, he may need a coat.
- Always keep your dog on a leash in the street or in crowded areas.

- If your dog likes to wander a little too far during walks, a small GPS tracker attached to its collar can help you find it every time!

There are lightweight, safe trackers available, like a little magic tag that shows where your dog is on a map. That way, no need to panic if your pup goes off on an adventure!”

Tips: You know, once I lost Twix! He heard a noise that scared him, and he hid for two hours without moving—I was really scared.

Ever since then, whenever we go for a walk in the forest, I put bells on him and Cookie (little jingle bells—at least I can hear them from far away).



And I also use a beeper, like the ones for keys—that way, if the GPS tells me he’s not far away and he’s not moving, I can beep him.



3. Games and Toys

A dog needs to play so he doesn't get bored. If he gets bored, he might get into trouble!

- Examples of dog toys: balls, ropes, chew toys.



But be careful: not all toys are safe for dogs!

No ropes: they can fray, and the dog might swallow pieces of them. This can block its stomach or intestines (this is called an intestinal obstruction), and it can be very serious, even fatal.

No real tennis balls: they're made for sports, not for dogs. Their rough surface wears down the dog's teeth like sandpaper, and the glue inside is toxic—not meant to be chewed.

 Result: Your dog may experience tooth pain, digestive problems, or poisoning.

So, what should we play with?

- Special dog balls (made of natural rubber, without glue)
- Sturdy toys without detachable strings
- Plush toys designed for pets (not for children)
- Interactive mental stimulation toys (treat dispensers, snuffle mats, etc.)

A good toy is one made FOR the dog.

Not just whatever you happen to have on hand.

- Puzzle toys: snuffle mats, games where they have to search for treats.



- Active games: chasing a ball, playing hide-and-seek with their owner.



Playing with your dog is good for him and it's fun too!

4. Grooming

How to explain to Mom and Dad how to help you groom your dog (without disturbing or hurting him)

. Bath time: what you really need to know

Not all dogs have the same type of coat, and this completely changes how often and how they need to be groomed. There are actually two main categories of coat.

- Coats that require regular washing:

These coats, often long, fine, and not naturally shedding, should be groomed every 2 to 4 weeks at most. These are the coats typically found in small dogs such as the Yorkshire Terrier, Bichon Frise, Shih Tzu, or Poodle. These breeds require frequent brushing to prevent mats, as well as regular bathing with appropriate products.

- Coats that should not be washed (or only very rarely):

These are dogs with short hair or shedding coats (moulting), such as Golden Retrievers, Labradors, German Shepherds, Jack Russells, or Pinschers. These dogs should not be bathed too often, as their skin is protected by a natural layer of sebum.

Washing them too frequently risks damaging this protective layer, leading to itching, irritation, and skin sensitivity.

You should focus on regular brushing and only bathe them when truly necessary (after a swim in the ocean, for example), but in such cases, a rinse with clean water is often sufficient.

Important: Never wash a dog with human shampoo.

A dog's skin pH is completely different from that of a human. Using our products can cause serious skin imbalances.

If you don't have a specific dog shampoo, genuine Marseille soap made with olive oil can work occasionally.

🐾 Finally, a dog isn't "dirty" just because it's rolled in dirt or grass.

For example, Golden Retrievers have self-cleaning fur; they shake themselves off, lick themselves, and naturally remove impurities.

In this case, a good brushing is more than enough—no need for soap every time!

Paws and belly: clean after every outing if needed:

Use a dog wipe or a soft, damp glove.

Especially if they've walked in mud, poop, or on hot asphalt

Also check between their paw pads: no pebbles, thorns, or grass stuck in there!

. Ears: check once a week:

Use a special dog ear cleaning solution, never a cotton swab.

Ask Mom or Dad to clean the entrance to the ear canal with a soft cloth or paper towel.

If the ears smell bad or are red: see a vet immediately!

. Eyes: clean gently

Use an eye wipe for dogs or a compress soaked in saline solution

Clean from the inner corner outward, without applying pressure

. Teeth: brush if possible!

Toothbrush + dog-specific toothpaste

Otherwise: natural chew bones or dental sticks

No cooked bones! (Dangerous for the stomach)

In summary:

- Gentleness, respect, appropriate products
- No alcohol, no bleach, no human soap
- Cleaning is also about caring for their health and dignity

5. Visits to the vet

Just like us, a dog needs to go to the animal doctor: the vet!

- **Check-ups** help ensure that the dog is in good health.



- **Vaccinations** are important for preventing diseases.



- **Deworming treatments** eliminate intestinal parasites in dogs. They are generally recommended **every three months**, depending on the type of product used.

 For your information, here are the main intestinal parasites in dogs

1. **Roundworms**

These long, white worms look like spaghetti. They are common in puppies and can cause a swollen belly, vomiting, or diarrhea.

2. **Tapeworms (flatworms)**

They appear as flat segments, often visible around the anus or in the stool, resembling grains of rice.

3. **Hookworms**

Small and thin, these worms attach themselves to the intestinal wall and feed on blood, which can lead to anemia.

4. **Whipworms**

Living in the colon, they can cause bloody diarrhea and weight loss.

5. **Giardia (single-celled parasite)**

Microscopic, this parasite causes digestive problems such as loose or frothy stools.

- **External parasite treatments:** essential protection against fleas and ticks

Fleas and ticks are tiny pests that hide in a dog's fur. They bite and cause intense itching, which bothers your dog and can even make them sick.

Fortunately, there are special products to keep them away! They're kind of like magic shields that protect your dog.

They're usually applied **once a month**, so your dog can relax and stop scratching all the time. That way, your dog stays in top shape and can play without being bothered!

A healthy dog is a happy dog!

CHAPTER 7: QUIZZES AND INTERACTIVE GAMES



1. What should you do before petting a dog?

- a) Jump on him to give him a hug
- b) Ask its owner for permission
- c) Touch it right away without waiting

2. Why shouldn't you run toward a dog?

- a) Because it might think you want to attack it
- b) Because he'll want to play with you right away
- c) Because he loves it when people run up to him

3. How can you tell if a dog is stressed?

- a) It wags its tail and jumps for joy
- b) He backs away, tucks his tail between his legs, and may growl
- c) He barks, asking to be petted

4. Can you name three toys that dogs like?

- a) A ball
- b) A tug toy
- c) A snuffle mat

Answers:

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a, b, c

CONCLUSION

A dog is not a toy.

It needs food, walks, playtime, and care.

Owning a dog means committing to taking good care of it **for its entire life**, because dogs live a long time and require daily attention.

If you follow these tips, your dog will be happy and healthy, and you'll be the best of friends!

Here's an important message you can share with your parents.

Dad, Mom... I'd like to tell you something about dogs

I know you might be afraid of dogs. I know you want to protect me, and that you think **all dogs can be dangerous.**

But you know...

Not all dogs are mean, and not all dogs are aggressive either.

Some are friendly, playful, shy, or very gentle...

But I also know that not all dogs are nice—that's true.

Just like with humans, some dogs are very gentle, others are more timid, and still others can be unpredictable because they have mental health issues.

Some dogs may have a behavioral disorder, trauma, or neurological problem that makes them unpredictable or aggressive.

This is what we might call a form of canine mental illness—like a **“flaw,”** an old-fashioned term for **“behavioral disorder,”** **“hereditary defect,”** or **“abnormality.”**

It is therefore important not to generalize:

- Not all dogs are dangerous.
- Not all dogs are suited to living with children.
- And some dogs need help just as much as a human suffering from psychological distress.

It's not their fault, and just because one dog had a rough time doesn't mean they're all the same.

An aggressive dog is often a dog that has been hurt, perhaps because it was abused or scared... or because it needs help.

Sometimes, it's as if they're carrying a heavy sorrow they can't put into words.

If a dog suddenly becomes aggressive when it wasn't before, that's a serious warning sign.

A well-balanced dog does not attack without reason.

This may indicate:

- **Unresolved trauma**
- **Physical or joint pain**
- **A neurological problem**
- **Or the onset of a behavioral disorder**

In this case: **consult a veterinarian** as soon as possible.

Afterward, a dog trainer or behaviorist can help you understand and correct the situation.

As for me, I'm learning to be careful, to protect myself, and to respect dogs.

I've learned not to run toward a dog, to ask before petting one, and that if a dog ever attacks me, I know how to protect myself. (I curl up into a ball, hide my head, and stay still.)

But aggression isn't inevitable, and it's a warning sign that should be taken seriously. I'd also like you to know that **we shouldn't stigmatize all dogs** because of a single isolated incident.

A kind, well-trained dog can become a great friend. And that doesn't mean I'm going to approach just any dog.

Thank you for listening... and for not being afraid on my behalf. I promise to be careful. You can trust me, and learn with me to get to know dogs... Rather than running away from them all!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CLARISSE FERRÈRE:

A LOVE FOR DOGS STRONGER THAN THE FEAR

Today, Clarisse FERRÈRE is a woman passionate about dogs, but her story with them began with fear rather than affection.

As a child, she had a genuine phobia of dogs. Whenever they approached, she would automatically cross the street, her heart pounding, her legs trembling. She would freeze, unable to move, paralyzed by fear.

She still remembers that day when, at age 12, she was walking with her cousins and her godmother: a pack of about ten dogs of all sizes surrounded them. Her heart in her throat, she thought they were going to attack.

That day, too, nothing happened... but the fear took deeper root.

Later, as she was coming out of a wooded path with her friend Alice, a large dog was waiting for her at the end of the trail. Alone facing him, Alice and Clarisse didn't move. The menacing dog tried to bite her.

She panicked, screamed, and ran in circles around her friend Alice, hoping to escape. Alice, however, remained calm. She tried to reassure Clarisse, keeping her composure until the owner finally arrived and took the dog away.

Clarisse was never bitten. But her fear was very real, deep, and uncontrollable. A fear that few understood, but which ruined her life whenever a dog crossed her path.

And yet... everything changed when she was 15, thanks to a dog named Molly, a Coton de Tuléar.

Molly came into her life like a little miracle: she was the one who broke down the barrier of fear, little by little, with gentleness and loyalty. Thanks to her, Clarisse discovered just how exceptional dogs could be as companions. A unique bond was formed. Later, Molly had puppies, including Rocky, whom Clarisse kept and loved for 17 years, until his last breath. His loss, like Molly's, was a source of immense grief.

But life, once again, brought new hearts to love into her path. Her brother gave her Caline, a Labrador mix as gentle as she was loyal.

Then, Cookie, a golden retriever with a tender gaze, came to live with Clarisse when her original family moved to Papeete and couldn't take her along. It was obvious: Cookie would stay with her. When Caline passed away, Cookie seemed sad and lonely.



That's when Clarisse decided to turn that grief into a labor of love: she launched her dog boarding facility, "Le Cocon de Cookie," a place of love, play, and kindness for pups.



Her company's logo tells the whole story: from left to right, you can see Cookie, Twix, Molly, Rocky, and Caline. A heartfelt tribute to those who transformed her life. Twix, in fact, arrived later, as a boarder.

This Staffy mix, a former rescue dog, immediately won over Clarisse and Cookie. There was no turning back: he was now part of the family.



Clarisse didn't just follow her heart—she also took her training seriously.

She earned her certification to work with companion animals and completed training in animal behavior and welfare. She continues to learn every day. She also holds a **TAV (Transportation of Live Animals)** license, which allows her to transport dogs safely and in compliance with regulations.

Today, she cares for every dog with the same attention she would give her own companions: safety, joy, respect for each dog's pace, and lots of love.

Her story is a beautiful testament to how a deep fear can be transformed into a calling, and a wound into strength. Thanks to dogs, Clarisse has learned to trust, to love without fear... and today, she passes all of this on to the animals she welcomes with tenderness into the cozy haven she has created for them.

A home where dogs are not merely boarded, but loved as members of the family.

I'd like to thank Lara Cantos for the translation of
this book.



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